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## Gaumont-British Picture Corporation, Ltd.

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Gaumont-British Picture Corporation, Ltd.



Mr. C. M. WOOLF, Deputy Chairman

Director  
Gaumont-British Picture Corporation, Ltd.  
Gainsborough Pictures (1928), Ltd.



Mr. MAURICE OSTRER



Mr. MICHAEL BALCON

General Manager of Film Production  
Gaumont-British Picture Corporation, Ltd.  
Managing Director  
Gainsborough Pictures (1928), Ltd.

## DIRECTORS

Gaumont-British Picture Corporation, Ltd.



Mr. S. ROWSON



Mr. J. P. LITTLE



Mr. C. H. DADE



Col. H. A. MICKLEM, C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O.

Theatres, Dance Halls, Restaurants, etc., owned, controlled or managed by  
**Gaumont-British Picture Corporation, Ltd.**  
 and  
**Associated Companies**

## LONDON AND DISTRICT

The Tivoli, Strand.  
 The Tivoli Buffet.  
 The Regent, Stamford Hill.  
 Marble Arch Pavilion.  
 Shepherd's Bush Pavilion.  
 Avenue Pavilion, Shaftesbury Avenue.  
 Empire, Holloway.  
 Dalston Picture House and Dance Salon.  
 Gaumont Palace, Streatham.  
 Britannia, Hoxton.  
 Electric Pavilion, Lavender Hill.  
 Tatler, Charing Cross Road.  
 Gaumont Palace, Lewisham (in course of erection).  
 Super Cinema, West Kensington.  
 Canterbury Music Hall, Westminster Bridge Road.  
 Ye Olde Varieties, Hoxton.  
 Hoxton Cinema, Hoxton.  
 Imperial Playhouse, Stratford.  
 Broadway Super Cinema, Stratford.  
 Palmadium, Palmers Green.  
 Canning Town Cinema, Canning Town.  
 Grand Cinema, Canning Town.  
 New Cross Cinema and Dance Hall, New Cross.  
 Lion, Rotherhithe.  
 King's Hall, Penze.  
 Gaumont Palace, Peckham.  
 Palais de Danse, Wimbledon.  
 Stamford Hill Cinema, Clapton Common.  
 Tatler (late Super), Charing Cross Road.  
 Putney Palace, Putney.  
 Wandsworth Palace, Wandsworth.

Savoy, Leyton.  
 The Rivoli, Whitechapel Road.  
 Shakespeare Theatre, Clapham Junction.  
 Woolwich Hippodrome, Woolwich.  
 The Palace, Southall.  
 Putney Hippodrome.  
 Broadway Theatre, New Cross.  
 Camden Hippodrome, Camden Town.  
 Empire Mile End, Mile End Road.  
 Kennington Theatre, Kennington.  
 Kilburn Palace, Kilburn.  
 Old Kent Picture House, Old Kent Road.  
 New Gallery, Regent Street, W.  
 The Palace Cinema, Kentish Town Road, N.W.  
 The Palace, Tottenham, N.  
 The Red Hall Cinema, Waltham Green, S.W.  
 The New Victoria, Victoria.  
 Super Cinema, Ilford.  
 Palais de Danse, Ilford.  
 Premier Super Cinema, East Ham.  
 Rink Cinema, Sydenham.  
 The Apollo, Stoke Newington.  
 The Marlborough Theatre, Holloway.  
 Globe Theatre, Acton.  
 Palais de Danse, Tottenham.  
 Tower Cinema, Peckham.  
 Tower Cinema Annex, Peckham.  
 Hackney Pavilion, Hackney.  
 Majestic, Clapham.  
 Coronet, Notting Hill.  
 Empire, Plumstead.

West Ham Lane Kinema, West Ham.  
 Empire, East Ham.  
 Empire, Willesden.  
 Grand Kinema, Edgware Road.  
 Grand Hall, Finchley.  
 New Bohemia, Finchley.  
 Pavilion, Balham.  
 Kilburn Grange.  
 Maida Vale Palace.  
 The Finsbury Park Cinema, Seven Sisters Road, N.  
 The Palais de Danse, Finsbury Park, N.  
 King's Cross Cinema, King's Cross, N.  
 Angel, High Street, Islington.  
 Broadway Palladium, Ealing.  
 Blue Hall, Islington.  
 Blue Hall Annex, Islington.  
 Palladium, Balham.  
 Hippodrome, Crouch End.  
 Imperial Picture Theatre, Highbury.  
 Rink Cinema, Clapton.  
 Palladium, Argyle Street (Music Hall).  
 Empire, Holborn (Music Hall).  
 Empire, Finsbury (Music Hall).  
 The Capitol, Haymarket.  
 Astoria Cinema, Charing Cross Road.  
 Kit Cat Restaurant, Haymarket.  
 Astoria Dance Salon, Charing Cross Road.  
 Queen's Hall, Cricklewood.  
 Queen's Hall, Rushley Green.  
 Prince's Playhouse, Kennington.  
 Rialto, Epsom.  
 Rialto, Leytonstone.  
 Empire, Edmonton.

## PROVINCES

Hippodrome, Stoke.  
 Empire Picture House, Hainley.  
 Coliseum, Burslem.  
 Gaumont Palace, Birmingham.  
 Empire, Bradford.  
 Savoy, Glasgow.  
 Academy Picture Theatre, Brighton.  
 Hippodrome, Cardiff.  
 Coliseum, Newport.  
 New Palace, Bristol.  
 Savoy, Plymouth.  
 Empire, Colchester.  
 Hippodrome, Colchester.  
 Picture House, Ramsgate.  
 Savoy, Grimsby.  
 Corona Cinema, Great Crosby, Liverpool.

Rivoli, Aigburth, Liverpool.  
 Picturedrome, Dingle, Liverpool.  
 Empress Picture House, Tue Brook, Liverpool.  
 Magnet Cinema, Wavertree, Liverpool.  
 Grand, Liverpool.  
 Beresford Cinema, Liverpool.  
 Tower Cinema and Ballroom, Morecambe.  
 Regent, Weston-super-Mare.  
 Haymarket Picture House, Norwich.  
 Grand Theatre, Gainsborough.  
 King's Theatre, Gainsborough.  
 Electric, Cape Hill, Smethwick.  
 Rink Cinema, Smethwick.  
 Palladium, Plymouth.  
 Capitol, Ibrox, Glasgow.

Gaumont Palace, Middlesbrough.  
 New Pavilion, Newcastle-on-Tyne.  
 New Westgate Picture House, Newcastle-on-Tyne.  
 Electric, Chatham.  
 Electric Theatre, Burton-on-Trent.  
 Electric, Sowerby Bridge.  
 Electric Theatre, Fossgate, York.  
 Scala, York.  
 Electric, Halifax.  
 Coliseum, Leeds.  
 Assembly Rooms, Leeds.  
 Morley Street, Bradford.  
 St. George's Hall, Bradford.  
 Scala, Harrogate.  
 Princess, Barnsley.

Gaumont-British Picture Corporation, Ltd.  
and  
Associated Companies

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*Renting and Production Companies*

Gaumont Co., Ltd.    W. & F. Film Service, Ltd.    Ideal Films, Ltd.  
Gainsborough Pictures (1928), Ltd.

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*Theatre Owning Companies*

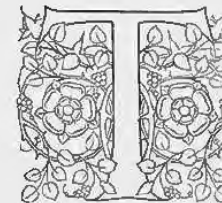
Provincial Cinematograph Theatres, Ltd.  
Denman Picture Houses, Ltd.  
General Theatre Corporation, Ltd.  
Associated Provincial Picture Houses, Ltd.  
Albany Ward Theatres, Ltd.  
Denman (London) Cinemas, Ltd.  
Denman (Midland) Cinemas, Ltd.  
New Century Pictures, Ltd.  
National Electric Theatres, Ltd.  
North of England (Cinemas), Ltd.

gc.    gc.    gc.

THE PRESENT



THE GAUMONT-BRITISH STUDIOS



THE great new Gaumont-British studios at Shepherd's Bush stand as a historic symbol for the whole British film industry. They stand as much for a triumphant conquest over almost overwhelming difficulties in the past as well as a tremendous token to the increasing greatness and prosperity of the British film. They are the tangible expression of a determination that the British film shall once again take its place as leader of the world industry as it was in the past. History has a way of repeating itself. It was the British industry which taught the world, in the original instance, much of its early film knowledge, and, before the War, was recognised as the leader of the world industry. What could be more appropriate than that the enormous Corporation which has reestablished the prestige of that pioneer work should once again be in the van of world progress, the most important and powerful company in Europe, and with greater potentialities than any other in the whole world?

*Britain's First Studio*

Here at Lime Grove will be found, therefore, the most important historic "document" of world film history, the first automatic film printing works set up for world-wide trade in 1912, and the old 1914 glass studio—the first of its kind in England—now being transformed into the equal of any in the world, and ready to make new film history.

The story of the drama behind the studios is the most fascinating in all recent industrial history. Two dates mark the culmination of two acts of this drama, the War, and the acquisition by Mr. Isidore Ostrer, in association with his brothers, Messrs. Mark and Maurice Ostrer, in

1922, of M. Leon Gaumont's holding in the original Gaumont Company, thus making it an entirely British concern.

How vast an achievement Mr. Isidore Ostrer has brought about is visible to all from the recital of the bare facts. The position of the British film industry at the end of the War was an ironic travesty of the leadership it had enjoyed in the world industry before the great struggle had broken out. The Armistice found it at its last gasp, moribund. But during the same period not only had America won the position of ascendancy, but had consolidated that position with superb organisation. Not only were the main markets controlled by their sales organisation, they had also obtained the most favourable exhibition facilities in the world markets.

Success and brilliant administration inevitably brought more and more success. In 1922 when Mr. Isidore Ostrer made his momentous entrance into the British film industry, the American industry was astride the whole film world, like a Colossus. The British industry appeared completely crushed.

#### **Mr. Isidore Ostrer's Plans**

It is not too much to say that in the last ten years Mr. Isidore Ostrer has performed a miracle. Step by step, in the face of relentless opposition, he brought his plans to fruition.

Today there is nothing which appertains to films that this gigantic Company, The Gaumont-British Corporation, does not deal with. They are completely equipped in every way. But the culmination of Mr. Ostrer's plans may be said to be the completion of these new studios at Shepherd's Bush. It has been his determination throughout to equip the Corporation with unrivalled production resources which shall be the certain means of elevating British films to their appointed place as the equal of the best made in the world, carrying the message of Britain, its culture and its general trade potentialities throughout the world. This great edifice is now in being. This is the culmination of the second act of this great drama—and the beginning of the third. For who can say now to what power in the world industry Gaumont-British may not aspire?

#### **Mr. C. M. Woolf—Mr. Mark Ostrer**

With all his genius for organisation, Mr. Ostrer could never have achieved his vast hopes in so short a time but for the loyal and enthusiastic assistance of his main supporters. Chief among these throughout have been Mr. C. M. Woolf and Mr. Mark Ostrer, who now function as Joint Managing Directors to the Gaumont-British Corporation. They have shared to the full Mr. Isidore Ostrer's unalterable belief in the future of British films.

Mr. C. M. Woolf is one of the foremost pioneers in the industry. His work in this connection is not only manifest in the policy pursued by his own Company, the W. & F. Film Service Ltd., or in his Chairmanship of Gainsborough Pictures (1928) Ltd., but also in the manner in which he has fostered and assisted the production schemes of several British companies not directly associated with the Gaumont-British Picture Corporation.

By these manifold activities Mr. Woolf has rendered sterling service to the British industry in general, and considerable credit is due to him for the development of the scheme which pools the creative and material resources of the Shepherd's Bush Studios and those of the Gainsborough Company at Islington.

Under this centralised scheme the two production centres between them will make 40 films yearly at an approximate cost of £1,000,000.

Already £250,000 has been spent on the new Shepherd's Bush Studios excluding the cost of modernising the existing 1927 studios and the replacement of the historic 1914 glass studio by another new building.

#### **Mr. Maurice Ostrer**

This combination, which provides for the most optimistic development which has ever taken place in British films has been, in no small measure, also due to the efforts of Mr. Maurice Ostrer who has been a Director of Gainsborough Pictures (1928) Ltd. since its inception as a public company. He has always worked untiringly towards the policy of a central executive control for all production, and its adoption by the directorate was no small triumph for him. Nor is this all. Throughout the building and equipping of the new Studios Mr. Maurice Ostrer

specially represented his colleagues on the Board, so that the Studios of to-day were largely influenced by the keenness and foresight he brought to bear on all the problems of construction.

The real value of the great changes brought about by Mr. Isidore Ostrer and his associates is best demonstrated by the astonishing change they have already brought about in British film production. The popularity of such pictures as "Michael and Mary," "The Faithful Heart," "The Ghost Train," "Hindle Wakes" and "Sunshine Susie," which were produced by the Gainsborough Company under the auspices of the Gaumont-British Picture Corporation, serves to indicate the greatly improved type of film aimed at. Equally noticeable has been the public's ready response to pictures striking refreshing and distinctive notes in cinema entertainment.

### **Two Acres of Studios**

The total available floor area of the two Studios Blocks now erected is over 80,000 square feet (almost two acres). This does not include the further Studio and Executive Block now in course of rebuilding, neither does it include the further additional Carpenters' and other Workshops, Garage, etc., which are being erected on land adjoining.

There are four large Studios (a fifth is also under construction) served by three Lifts (one Passenger and two Goods Lifts), the latter being capable of taking the largest motor car up to the flat roof (a run of over 90 feet). Each Studio is fed separately from all Workshops and Dressing Rooms, in order to avoid disturbing work in adjoining Studios.

The main Central Block is a new building, consisting of two floors of Dressing Rooms with Studio No. 4 on the First Floor, three Floors of Offices on the front, and above this are two further Studios. There are 49 Dressing Rooms, capable of accommodating, in all, nearly 600 actors.

There is also a large flat roof over the whole building, fitted with necessary facilities as a stage for shooting outdoor scenes.

Each Studio is provided with the fullest service accommodation, including Green Room, Floor Property, Camera Store, Paint Shop, and each has its own separate suite of Monitoring and Recording Rooms,

Positive and Negative Loading Rooms, etc., etc. Also suites of Drawing Offices and Art Departments.

The largest Studio (No. 4) is 85 feet wide and 136 feet long.

Galleries at two heights are provided around the Studio for placing and directing the lighting and in addition two cross gangways at the ceiling level.

The overhead lighting is suspended from trollies on the system of runways across the ceiling, enabling lamps to be concentrated and banked as required. All electrical apparatus for lighting and power is controlled from switchboards on the Floor and Galleries. The upper Gallery is also served from the Lift for transporting the large sunarcs, which weigh nearly half a ton, and the lower Gallery has a trolley system for quick manipulation of lamps.

The Electrical Equipment is of the very latest and most modern kind. Two 1,500 K.V.A. Transformers, four 125 kilowatt and two 250 kilowatt output motor generators have been installed. These supply D.C. current for the stage floors' lighting equipment, giving at 110 volts nearly 10,000 amperes at normal rating, but capable of supplying, if necessary, 15,000 amps for a short period.

### **Fog-free Films**

The ordinary lighting of the buildings, offices, dressing rooms, etc., in fact everything over and beyond the stages has necessitated the use of ten miles of cable and two miles of steel conduits. The cables which supply the current to the various stages weigh over fifteen tons. The great changes which have been brought about in electrical equipment are demonstrated in the fact that whereas in the early days of production six lamps were in use on the floor now over 300 are needed. These vary from 500 to 5,000 watts for incandescent lighting, and from 25 to 150 amperes for arc lighting.

In No. 4 Studio is situated the water tank 48 feet long, over 18 feet wide and 10 feet deep, formed in reinforced concrete and asphalted, and in the sides are provided porthole lights, from which underwater scenes can be filmed and lighted. The tank is floored over with removable

traps for access to any part without disturbing the whole, covered with wood blocks to match the Studio floor. This tank will hold 270 tons of water, and can be heated in a short time by steam ejectors, which draw cold water from the tank, mixing it with steam and discharging into the tank.

The all-important question of heating and ventilation to Studios is by a Plenum System through ducts and grilles concealed in the ceiling space and absolutely noiseless in operation.

The Ventilation Plant installed has a dual purpose. Firstly, the efficient ventilation of the Studios, which is of great importance to the artistes, and secondly the rendering of an atmosphere perfectly clear for the photography of films. This is of paramount importance to the producers, as a fog-free atmosphere means a picture of first-class quality.

To obtain this clear atmosphere, a Plenum is maintained in the Studios, by passing all the air through specially designed filters before being forced by a super silent centrifugal fan through ductwork, to suitable points of discharge in the Studios.

Approximately 14 tons of air is delivered into the Studios hourly, this being filtered and tempered to suit the required conditions.

#### *Since 1927*

Monitoring, Recording and other Service Rooms are also similarly ventilated.

The heating to dressing rooms generally is by radiators—crowd dressing rooms being also ventilated and heated by the Plenum System.

All the Studios and adjacent offices are protected throughout by sprinkler installation, with about 3,000 sprinkler heads, three stop valves and using about six miles of piping. They are served by two separate water mains, to ensure continuous supply in the event of one main being out of use through repairs or other causes.

Full facilities as to emergency escape and intercommunication are provided.

The adjoining Block, known as Studio No. 2, was originally built for silent films in 1927, and was continually in use, even while the new

## GAUMONT-BRITISH STUDIOS

1914

1927

1932

LIME GROVE, SHEPHERD'S BUSH, W.12



Consulting Architect: *Nicholas & Barnsley, F.R.I.B.A.*

**THE GAUMONT-BRITISH STUDIOS**  
 Line Grove, Shepherd's Bush, W.12

Architect: *S. R. Phipps, L.R.I.B.A.*



1914: Britain's First Studio



No. 4 Stage—Looking along a gallery



No. 6 Stage



The vast Open-Air Stage—90 feet above London



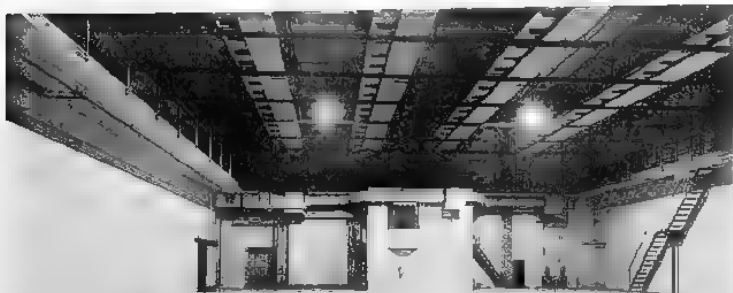
No. 4 Stage



A Star Dressing Room



Art Direction . A corner of the Designing Room



No. 5 Stage, cleared for a fresh production



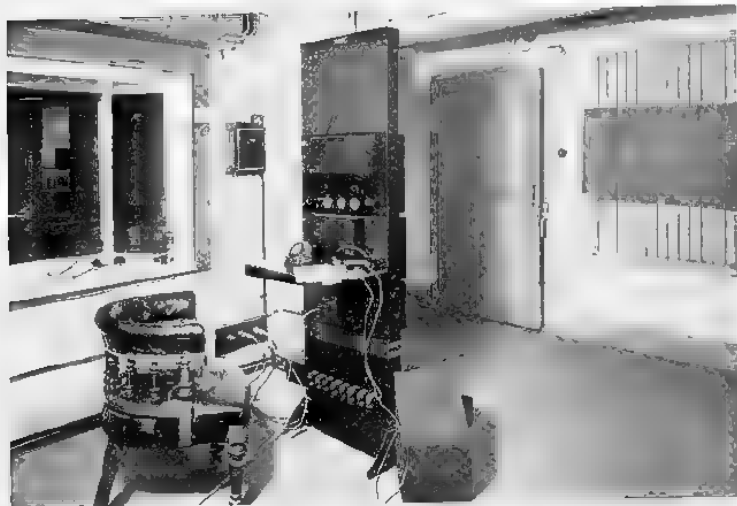
The Art Department Scale modelling for "sets"



The Plasterers' Shop



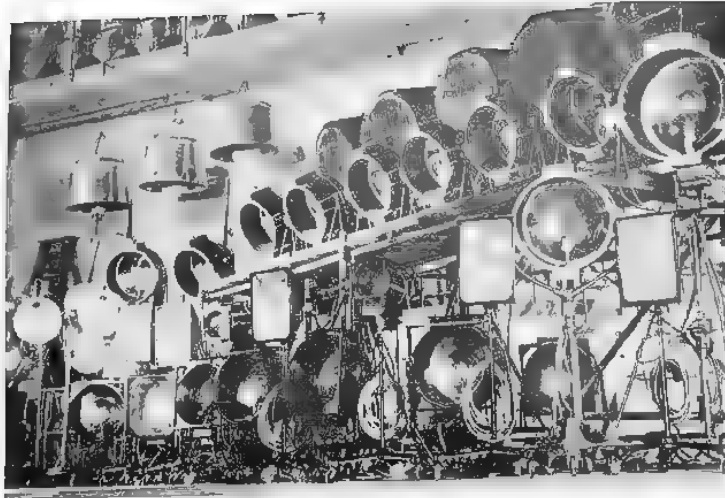
A "crowd" Dressing Room



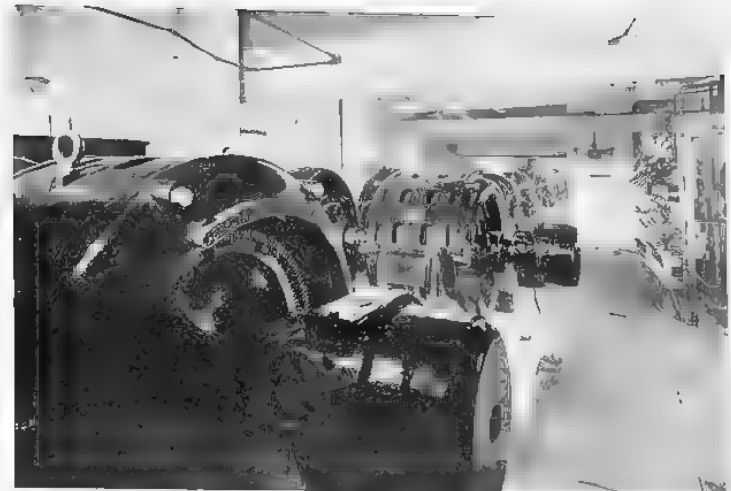
Where the sound is captured and controlled in the Monitoring Room



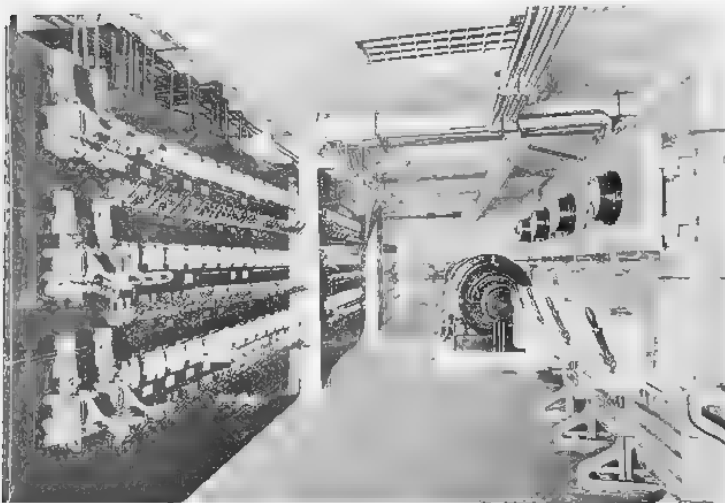
The Make-up Room



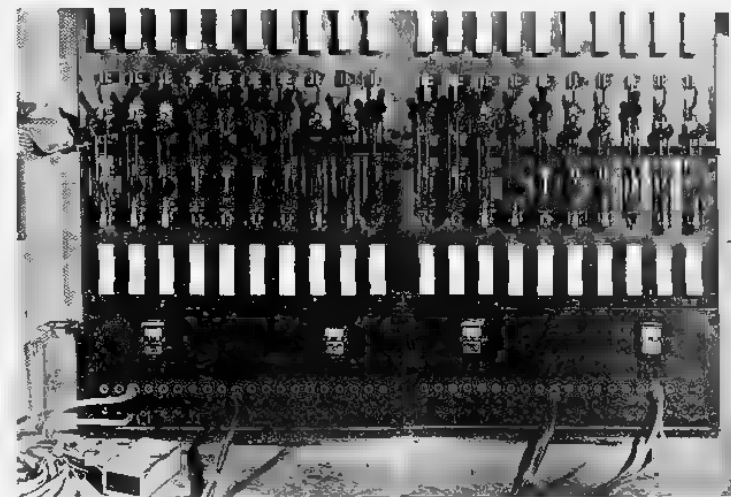
A representative collection of Studio Lighting



The Generating Station



Rows of Switches, gleaming Dials - all to make a "talkie"



A Studio Switch Panel



Preparing for "Rome Express" in a corner of the Modelling Room



The Carpenters' Shop—where illusions are created



A "close-up" of the same model



Leisure moments. The Club House, Gaumont-British Sports Ground, Norbury



"ROME EXPRESS" The Director and Cast

## THE LABORATORIES.



W. J. GELL, ESQ.  
Managing Director The Gaumont Co. Ltd.

Works Manager: W. H. HITCHCOCK



A Film Cutting and Assembling Room



Film Developing Plant



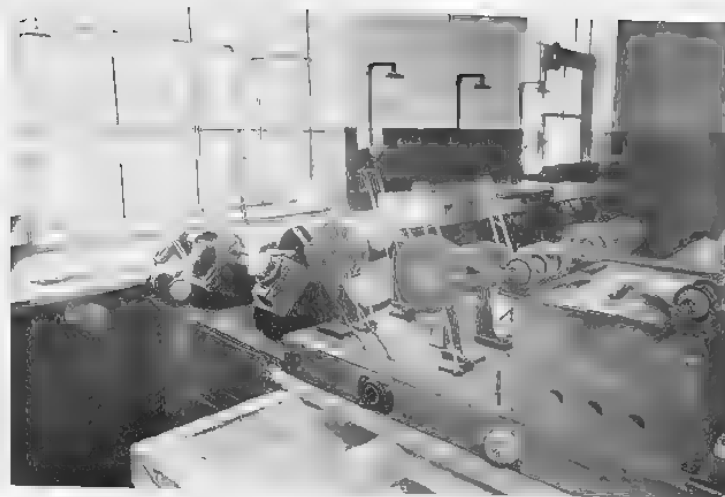
General view, Sound Film Printing



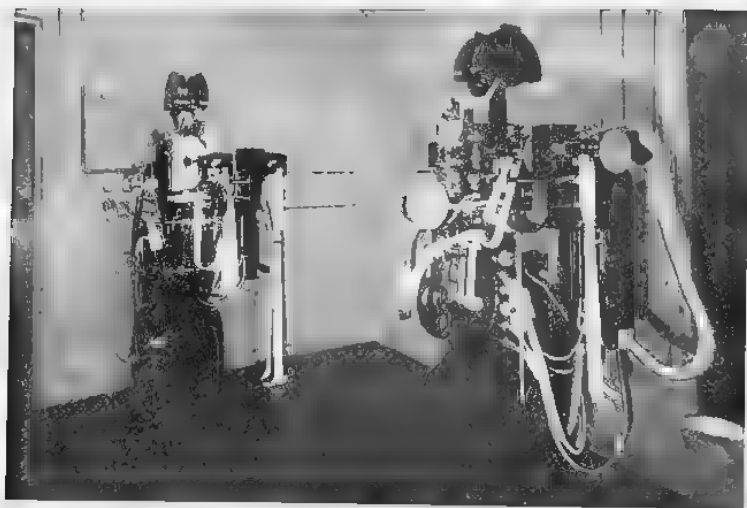
A Cutting and Examination Room



The Film Drying Cabinet



Newsreel Cutting and Assembly Room



Section of Sound Film Printing Plant



A Battery of Film Drying Machines

Block was being erected. It has now been reconstructed for sound film work, forming a Studio 116 feet long, 57 feet wide and 33 feet high.

The existing roof has been remodelled to take a suspended sound-proof ceiling, and similar Plenum ventilation installed, including fog filtering and air conditioning.

About 100,000 square feet of surface in these four Studios has been treated with acoustic damping material to secure the most satisfactory working conditions.

These immense operations have had a profound effect in assisting the present unhappy state of the labour market. It should be said that Mr. Isidore Ostrer and the Gaumont-British Corporation have insisted that throughout the work only British material and British labour should be used. The result of this decision has had far-reaching effects in all parts of the United Kingdom, from Lanarkshire to London, from the Teesside to Ashton-under-Lyne.

### **All-British Construction**

It is impossible even to hazard the number of thousands of workpeople who have been affected either directly or indirectly by this Gaumont-British enterprise. Cold figures do sometimes illumine, and those connected with these great Studios tell a vivid story.

Without taking into consideration the further developments which even now are in the course of erection, 1,400 tons of steel have already been used for the new Studio construction. Over a million bricks will also have been used.

This steel work alone has provided work for hundreds of men in Lanarkshire, along the Teesside and in London, in fact, it is difficult to form an opinion as to approximately how many men have been working on this material alone. For there are contributory industries and it is worth mentioning that the entire process—raw material, rolling and fabrication—involves the use of 4 tons of coal for every ton of steel which is now in position at Lime Grove. Hundreds of men were certainly employed continuously over a period of six months.

Although woodwork is of necessity reduced to a minimum in the film studio, in actual oak and fire-resisting woodwork very large sums have been spent. This inevitably means that a great number of carpenters and joiners are being kept fully occupied for some time. Scotland is also represented for the large and small lifts with which the new building is equipped. These were assembled at Glasgow.

Workmen in Lancashire were busy making the enormous sprinkler and hydrant system now installed; craftsmen in London made the steel fire escapes, concrete staircases and other metal fittings. Metal windows came from Bristol. Brickyards, ballast and sandpits throughout the Home Counties all contributed their quotas of materials.

The electrical requirements of the Studios deserve separate mention, for they have involved an enormous amount of work to many firms in London and the Provinces. The existing single phase supply has been converted into a three-phase supply capable of giving three times the present output. This means that two new huge transformers and switch-gear and a considerable quantity of cable have been laid from the Hammer-smith Electricity Works to the Corporation's sub-generating station. For this purpose some miles of roadways and pavements had to be taken up, a similar work having already been carried out by the Metropolitan Water Board who put in new mains to meet the large requirements for the sprinkler and hydrant system.

### *British Acoustic*

Black Country workers were busy on the new transformers and switch-gear and also on a further two generating sets. There was also all the work of dismantling and re-winding the entire plant. Insulated cable for the new Studios lighting installation was made in Surrey, while London is among the centres supplying Studios lamps and the hundred and one things that go to make up a modern studio's lighting equipment.

These component parts and materials do not exhaust the entire list. Plumbing is a considerable item, especially because of a large number of up-to-date bathrooms for the use of the artists.

But the most perfect studio accommodation would, in these days, be vitally incomplete and virtually useless if the sound-recording apparatus was not of the same equal perfection. Here is but another example of the length of Mr. Isidore Ostrer's vision, and the complete comprehensiveness of the ramifications of the Gaumont-British Corporation. The Corporation have developed their own sound-recording and reproducing system, British Acoustic, which is a separate subsidiary concern, and this system has, needless to say, been installed throughout the new Studios. All the latest improvements and up-to-date inventions in sound recording have been added to the system which has been installed so that future Gaumont-British pictures should be as memorable for their perfect sound as for their excellent general technique.

It is not only on the constructional side alone that this great enterprise of Gaumont-British is bound to have an effect on employment. Now that the new Studios are actually working, and with a scheduled programme of 40 films a year, the number of the permanent staff of all kinds must inevitably be greatly increased. This happy but inevitable development will affect nearly every class of worker, and nearly every class of society.

### *Preparing for the future*

There is also another vitally important step for the future of the industry which Mr. Ostrer and Mr. Balcon are now able to take, with the accommodation at their disposal. They are able to carry out one of their most cherished ideas which should ensure an ever-increasing proficiency of personnel in the Studios. An apprenticeship scheme is now actually in force whereby twenty young men are receiving intensive training, under the best and most favourable auspices, as future directors, producers, cameramen and specialists of all kinds. Furthermore, twelve young actresses have been given special scholarships to be taught the full essentials of film acting.

This provision for the future by continuity of experience and continuity of employment is one of the most hopeful presages for the future of the whole British industry, as well as for the future of Gaumont-British.

films. The intricacies of modern production are immense. Only the highest skilled experts can hope to keep pace with the manifold developments in the art of cinematography which seem to spring up, almost, over night. The amount of detail to be tackled is multifarious in all departments.

A striking example of the detailed care taken by the Gaumont-British Corporation in every phase of production is to be seen, amongst a hundred others, in the Reading Department. Nearly 5,000 plays, books, stories and original manuscripts are read by the six permanent readers during a year. Nothing is left to chance to provide the best high-class entertainment that can possibly be obtained. And this applies as fully and completely to the imaginative side of film production as to the preparation of the material fabric in which the pictures are to be made.

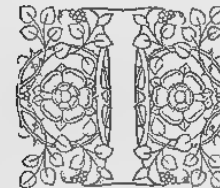
It is for this reason above all that while welcoming these new great Studios as the culmination of a great endeavour, Mr. Ostrer and his associates equally recognise that they are also only the foundation stone of an even greater future and increased prosperity for not only the Gaumont-British Corporation but also the whole British film industry. What has already been achieved is much indeed; it is as nothing to what can be accomplished in the future.



## THE FUTURE



### GAUMONT-BRITISH PRODUCTIONS PLANS



It is one thing to have erected the most up-to-date Studios in England; it is another to have a production policy worthy of the fabric. It can be definitely said that the Gaumont-British production policy during the last months has been one of preparation to seize the great opportunity of the new Studios in a completely worthy fashion. It is beyond dispute that the programme chosen, not only for the immediate future, but for the lasting policy of the Studios, is the most spectacular, ambitious and comprehensive that has been conceived for a British studio.

Everything possible has been designed to make films of a quality never before approached here. A million pounds will be spent each year on making films at Lime Grove and Islington. This is quite apart from any other investments the Corporation may make in other production companies in pursuance of their policy of stimulating British production as widely as possible.

#### Centralised Control

Control of all Gaumont-British production, either at Lime Grove or at Islington, is in the joint hands of Mr. Mark Ostrer and Mr. C. M. Woolf, Joint Managing Directors of the Corporation, Mr. Maurice Ostrer acting as liaison officer. Their chief executive officer is Mr. Michael Balcon, Managing Director of Gainsborough Pictures, who thus becomes Producer of all Gaumont-British films.

The selection of the film which should inaugurate production in the new Studios was inevitably of the greatest importance. It is doubtful if a happier choice could have been made than "Rome Express." And to make assurance doubly sure, Mr. Balcon collected the finest team of

actors and actresses ever brought together in this country. Truly an "all star cast"; for each one of them is a proven popular favourite with the public. To Mr. Walter Forde has fallen the honour of being the first director of a film in these new Studios of unexampled opportunities.

But if the announcement of the stupendous cast for "Rome Express" caused a sensation, it may still be taken as only typical of the quality of production one can assume from Shepherd's Bush now that the full programme can be carried out.

The most careful thought has been given to the whole programme. The most convincing array, not only of artists, but also of writers has been "lined up"—to use the current Americanism. To these must be added technicians without equal in the country.

It is simply a plain statement of fact that this programme ushers in an entirely new epoch in film production in this country. It is not only the magnitude of the programme, it is also the quality of the product which will in itself cause a revolution in picture making here, and in the markets abroad.

### **Good Story Material**

The basis of all film production is, inevitably, stories. It is common knowledge that hitherto the world market has regarded the stories used in British films as not being, by any means, the strongest side of our productions. Mr. Balcon has so built up his team of writers that such a reproach is inevitably removed. Mr. Angus McPhail is his chief lieutenant and in full charge of the scenario department both at Lime Grove and at Islington. The best brains in current literature have been called into the Gaumont-British service. Original stories have been sought from Miss Clemence Dane, Mr. J. B. Priestley, Mr. Hugh Walpole, Mr. A. P. Herbert, and Mr. H. M. Harwood.

No subject could better be chosen for portraying the essential English atmosphere than Mr. Priestley's "The Good Companions," which should repeat its phenomenal literary and theatrical success on the screen. This will be one of the first productions in the new Studios, and will be treated so as to give a wide panorama of English life. Mr. J. B. Priestley is also engaged upon an original story for the Gaumont-British Corporation.

Other well-known writers who are now writing stories for production at Lime Grove are: Mr. Boyd Cable, Mr. W. P. Lipscombe, Mr. Arthur Elton, Mr. Bryan Wallace, Mr. J. O. C. Orton, Mr. Douglas Furber, Mr. Frank Vosper, Mr. Ronald Jeans, Mr. Edgar Middleton, Mr. Desmond Carter, Mr. Stafford Dickens (an English playwright who won distinction as a scenarist in America), and Miss Marjorie Gaffney, while set for immediate production are stories by Ian Hay, Cecil Roberts, Douglas Murray, W. F. Morris and Miss Christine Jope-Slade.

Music plays an increasingly important part in modern production. The Gaumont-British Corporation are fortunate to have in Mr. Louis Levy, who is Director of Music to the Studios, one of the foremost film musicians in the country. Arrangements have been made with prominent composers, amongst whom is M. Jean Gilbert, Mr. Vivian Ellis and Mr. Michael Krausz, to write special accompanying music for the gigantic production programme.

The selected musical programme provides a most striking example of the boldness of the projected programme. In the new Studios an important experiment in film production will take place, when for the first time in film history, a famous opera will be transmuted into a film. No happier choice could have been made than the selection of "Die Fledermaus," with its worldwide popular appeal. Film directors all over the world will be watching this experiment with the greatest interest.

### **Great Experiments**

The enormous success of the Gaumont-British and Gainsborough "musicals" has even now made them of international importance. But even the success of "Sunshine Susie" will, in all probability, be dwarfed by those now scheduled for production. Mr. Victor Saville's "Love on Wheels," "Marry Me" by Mr. William Thiele (who will direct "Die Fledermaus"), Mr. Walter Forde's "Jack's the Boy" are but the first of a style of entertainment which the Corporation are rapidly making their own for world market delectation.

In this connection one of the most important arrangements which Mr. Isidore Ostrer and Mr. C. M. Woolf have brought about is the alliance which has been concluded with the world-famous Ufa Company, whereby the two most important production companies in Europe should join forces in the production of films.

Work on the first of these English versions of selected Ufa super-productions, "Happy Ever After," is already under way in Berlin, where Mr. Jack Hulbert, Miss Cicely Courtneidge, Mr. Sonny Hale, and Mr. Edward Chapman costar with Miss Lilian Harvey who also appears in the French and German versions. Mr. Erich Pommer is supervising "Happy Ever After" in close association with Mr. Michael Balcon, while Mr. Robert Stevenson, the young Gainsborough scenarist who has written the English adaptation, is at the Neubabelsberg Studios collaborating with Herr Martin, the director of the film.

But this brilliant programme by no means exhausts all the stupendous plans for making Shepherd's Bush Studios the envy of the whole production world. Mr. Robert Flaherty, famous director of "Nanook" and "Tabu," is even now at work on the first Irish epic, "Man from Aran." A Polar subject is also to be filmed, and British industry will increasingly be featured in future productions.

#### Directors and Artists

For so stupendous a programme only the best directors could be considered. Mr. Balcon's choice is everywhere acknowledged as being excellent. Amongst these will be Mr. Victor Saville, Mr. Walter Forde, Mr. T. Hayes Hunter, Mr. William Thiele, Mr. Anthony Asquith, and Mr. Sinclair Hill, and several other internationally known names will shortly be added to this outstanding list.

On the acting side the list of actors and actresses on contract are of equal distinction, including Mr. Jack Hulbert, Miss Cicely Courtneidge, Mr. Gordon Harker, Mr. John Stuart, Miss Belle Chrystall, Miss Renate Muller, Mr. Fred Kerr, Mr. Sonnie Hale, Mr. Edward Chapman, Miss Leonora Corbett, Mr. Edmund Gwenn and Miss Renee Clama.

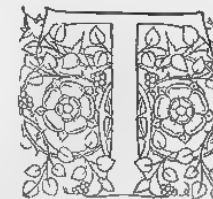
This formidable programme does not include films which will continue to be made under the Corporation's policy of fostering outside British production. Collaboration with other companies has been arranged and films will be jointly made with British Lion, Welsh-Pearson and Associated Radio Pictures.

Previous co-operation between the Gainsborough and British Lion Companies has, of course, resulted in such fine pictures as "The Calendar," "The Case of the Frightened Lady" and "Whiteface."

## THE PAST



### PRODUCTION HISTORY



HE history of production at Lime Grove is largely the history of the British film industry and, in perspective, of the whole world industry.

The first film production studios in England were established by the original Company in 1898 and the first studio was established at Freeman's Cricket Field, Champion Hill, Dulwich. The first director was Mr. Alfred Collins. Many successful films were made at Dulwich, and it must be remembered that at that period England was the chief supplier of films for the American market, and to most of the Continent as well.

The titles of these early films are of interest; typical ones being "A Runaway Match," "Napoleon and the English Sailor," "Lost a Leg of Mutton" and "Curfew Shall Not Ring Tonight."

In view of the cinema of to-day perhaps the most astonishing innovations were the Chronophone and the Chronochrome.

The Chronophone can claim to be the true forebear of the talking picture. The method was a synchronised gramophone disc sounding beside the silent picture. The success of this new form of entertainment was instantaneous. In 1901 it was presented, and later was shown at the London Pavilion and in other West End cinemas for over a year. Then a number of touring units travelled the country and were equally successful. Sir Harry Lauder, George Robey (who has renewed his interesting association with the Corporation in 1932 in "Marry Me"), Ernie Mayne and Miss Clarice Mayne were amongst the earliest stars, while a number of excerpts from Gilbert and Sullivan were also produced. Chronophone may almost be said to be the direct grandfather of the British Acoustic System of to-day.

The Chronochrome was an equally successful attempt at reproduction in natural colours. The system was based on the simultaneous projection of three pictures through a coloured screen in green, red and purple violet. In 1913 it was privately demonstrated at the London Pavilion, but afterwards it became a regular attraction over a long period at West End cinemas and afterwards at Sheffield.

Work at Dulwich continued, especially with the recording of important topical events, until in 1913 what may be said to be the first "super" ever made in England was undertaken. This was 'The Life of Richard Wagner,' with an elaborate musical setting provided by the London Symphony Orchestra under the direction of Mr. (now Sir) Landon Ronald.

In the same year it became quite clear that production must be undertaken on a far larger scale in England than ever before. Obviously far more extensive studios were necessary. So the first building ever erected in this country solely for the purpose of film production was erected with the most modern equipment and laboratories on the same site at Shepherd's Bush as that on which the new great Studios stand today.

Among the host of interesting facts to be found in this period of the early history of the Company it may be of particular interest to recall that among the cameramen employed at that time was G. H. Wilkins, now universally known as Sir Hubert Wilkins, the famous Polar explorer.

#### 1914

The original Lime Grove Studios were completed in 1914, when the war came to inevitably dislocate all previous plans. But the progressive work went steadily on in the face of the most adverse circumstances. It is of particular interest to recall that it was at Shepherd's Bush that the first war film ever made showing aeroplane fighting was "shot."

The second film was directed by Mr. George Pearson. It was called "Ultus, the Man from the Dead," and was so successful that a series of Ultus pictures were made. The trade show of the original Ultus film was held in the studio itself and caused a great sensation at the time.

The "Ultus" series of pictures sold in every film market in the world. The next film to follow this series was "Sally Bishop" by E. Temple Thurston.

In 1915 another big innovation was brought about when the lighting was re-equipped in the most modern way. But, later, the Government took over the building and the studio was used for research and propaganda purposes, although film production was permitted to continue part-time. Thus the Shepherd's Bush Studios not only assisted in the propagation of the war, but also provided entertainment for a war-weary public.

At the time of the Armistice a screen version of H. G. Wells's "The First Men in the Moon" was being made in the glass studio. Much research had been made into the questions of lighting and cameras, and the Company was the first to use gas-filled lamps on a large scale.

But it was, by now, obvious that more studio room was necessary, and rebuilding was decided upon. On 7th February, 1927, the foundation stone of the new Studios was laid by Sir Philip Cunliffe-Lister, then President of the Board of Trade. A second studio was afterwards erected on the site of an old cottage and orchard, and during this period the new studio turned out many notable successes.

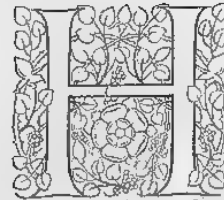
#### When "Talkies" came

Once again a revolution in the industry caused a complete alteration in plans. Maurice Elvey was directing "High Treason" when talkies came like a bolt from the blue. The picture had to be turned into a "talkie" under the most difficult conditions. Sound-proofing had to be done while the film was actually being made.

Another important date occurred in the summer of 1931 when, during Victor Saville's direction of the talk-film version of "Hindle Wakes" the new condenser microphone of British Acoustic was first used. Since that date all Gaumont-British productions have used this apparatus.

This, in brief, is the absorbing story of the history of the Lime Grove Studios where nearly 130 films have been made. Important as the part these Studios have played in the past in the history of the most popular entertainment the world has ever known, there is today every indication that the future holds even greater success, and an even more important part in determining the future history of the world industry.

## THE LABORATORIES



HAVING outlined such a stupendous programme of production as is in the front of this volume, there must of necessity be, as its corollary, the most efficient and up-to-date laboratories. Ever since 1896 Lime Grove laboratories led the world in laboratory work, indeed, until the war they were the film printers to the whole of the world industry. Today, under the new centralised scheme of production with the most ambitious programme ever planned in England, they are equally prepared for all emergencies, and in position to tackle the most intricate of problems. At the present time they are handling over two million feet of film a week.

These laboratories and the film printing plant are in an extensive, specially designed building adjoining the Studios. Here, too, will be found another interesting piece of film history, for the first laboratory, for the first studio in 1914, is still to be seen, and to be compared with the vast improvements and extensions which have compulsorily taken place since that period.

It was the presence of the laboratories at Lime Grove which largely dictated the establishment of Studios there, which today are the hub of the cinematograph industry of Great Britain.

The keynote of the laboratories at Lime Grove is the extreme efficiency of their organisation. The casual observer would be primarily impressed by the apparent quiet which seems to obtain everywhere. The second impression would be the small number of operatives who turn out two million feet of film a week. The reason for this, of course, is the high degree of efficiency which has been obtained in the laboratories from continual experience over the last eighteen years. This is particularly emphasised in the automatic film printing machine which was designed by Mr. W. H. Hitchcock, the Manager in charge of the laboratories, and which has stood the ultimate test of an apparatus of this kind

in so far as it only took less than three days to alter the machinery when talk-films had suddenly to be made at Lime Grove.

But in some ways the laboratories are the most fascinating, as they are undoubtedly the most eerie part of these vast Studios. Go into the printing-room where "rushes" are developed. Here the faint gleam of a single beam of light creates a definitely awesome effect. For a while it is impossible to understand how anyone could work accurately with so minute a seeing power. But here is one of the Corporation's secrets. Every man they employ is an expert at his own job.

Or go into the Release printing-room. Here you will find a restful quiet and a few restful red lights, dimly lighting up a long room where six quiet men are joining up sight and sound, and producing perfectly that imposing total of two million feet of film a week.

It is a fascinating sight to watch those 22 printing machines, each fully equipped for all possible film printing work, either for silent or synchronised stock, all automatically linked together by a common shaft, turning out films for distribution wherever Gaumont-British pictures are to be shown. Another noticeable aspect of this room is the atmosphere, which is specially conditioned to give the right degree of humidity to prevent static sparks which might injure the film in the least degree.

### High-speed Printing

Each of these machines can work on its own or be combined with the one next to it. For rapidity in producing sound-film stock, two machines are linked together, the right-hand one for the picture, the left-hand one for sound. For rapidity of marriage not even the blacksmith at Gretna Green could emulate these machines. But this is not the most rapid form of printing to be found in the laboratories. This method is known as parallel printing, but for Newsreels an even quicker method is necessary. By the method of series printing, 12 prints at a time can be, and very often have to be, made.

One of the most noticeable features of this plant is the extreme economy of mechanism. The normal sound printing machine is a highly elaborate piece of mechanism. The machines at Lime Grove appear to be the last word in simplicity.

In the next room is the best example of the great care taken by the laboratories in the whole of their film production. Here will be found the grading of the film after it has left the printing room.

Scenes and sequences, taken at various times, have a different degree of light, and these have to be brought to a common level. This is done by enforcing a metal clip on to the film which automatically changes the light and so reduces each scene to a common exposure.

There are 17 machines in the automatic developing plant which was devised as long ago as 1921 by an Englishman, Mr. H. V. Lawley, of the Lawley Apparatus Co. Ltd., and which has never been improved upon since. By this automatic plant, film can be developed at an average rate of 35 feet a minute and when necessary, 60 feet a minute. This was the first big automatic plant in this country, and it has maintained, through constant development, that position ever since. By this system, now only three men are necessary to operate the plant, whereas in the old days of racks and drums 24 men would have been required.

After development, the film automatically leaves the developing room, passing through the wall into the drying room, where it is fed directly into the machines. In both these rooms, air conditioning is of the very greatest importance. To obtain this, tubes of a depth of 25 feet, passing through two floors to the basement below, keep the air in perfect condition. The correct temperature is forced up the tubes from a common air chamber, which is controlled by thermostatic control tanks which are so delicate in their operation that automatically they react to a given temperature to half a degree, under any weather conditions.

This is but an outline of the fascination to be found in the Lime Grove laboratories which are of equal interest not only to the advanced scientist as to the ordinary filmgoer.



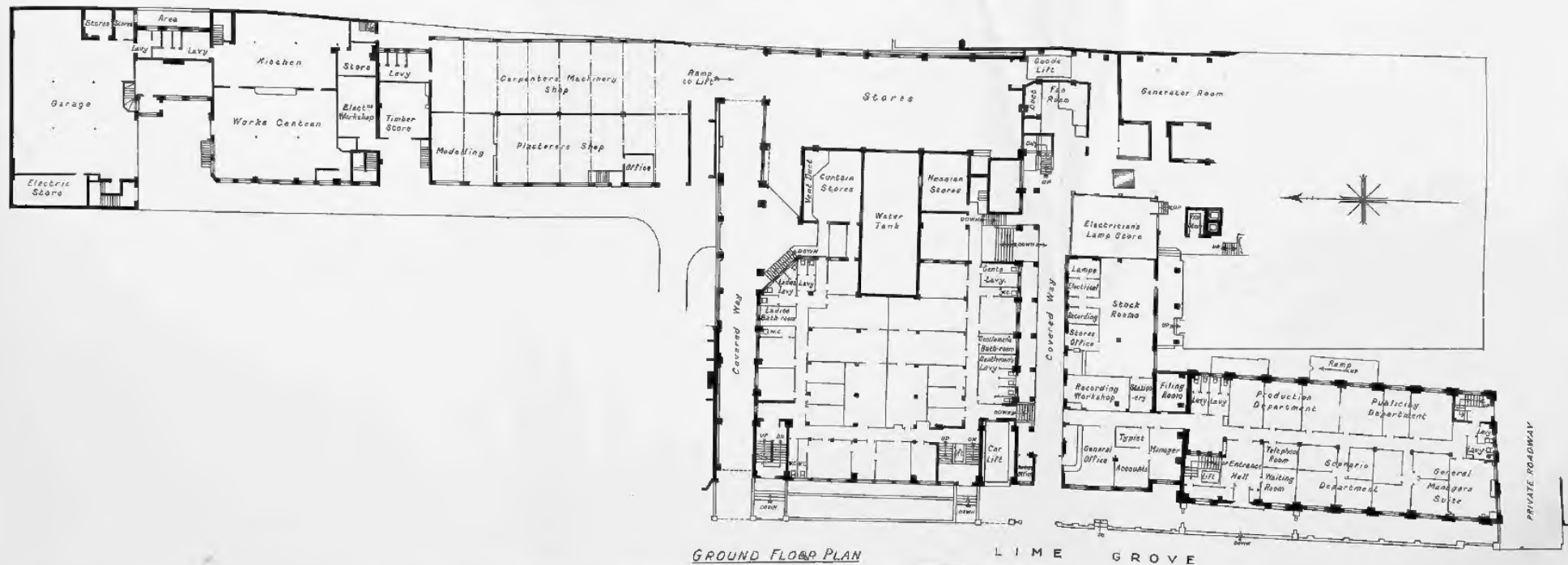
## FACTS AND FIGURES

Original Studios opened	1914	Fresh Air Supply (per hour)	14 tons
Extension of Studios opened	1927	Fire Prevention :—	
Present Studios opened	1931	5,000 Sprinkler Heads	
Number of Films produced	126	miles piping	6
Height of Building	80 feet	Separate Water Mains	2
Overall Length	480 feet	Light and Power Generators	
Depth	160 feet	(weight 8 tons each)	6
Road Frontage	256 feet	Capacity at normal rating	1,500 kilowatts
Total Area of Site	47,616 sq. feet	Capacity at half-hour rating	1,500 kilowatts
Number of Production Stages	5	1,500 K.V.A. Transformers	
Floor Area of Stages (over 2 acres)	90,000 sq. feet	serving above	2
Size of Largest Studio :—		250 K.V.A. Transformers for	
Length	136 feet	House Lighting	1
Width	85 feet	Weight of armoured cable	
Size of Water Tank in Studio :—		feeding Stage Lighting	
Length	48 feet	Switchboard	15 tons
Width	20 feet	Stage Lighting Central Switch	
Depth	10 feet	board	16
Water Capacity of Tank	270 tons	Studio Floor Lighting Unit	510
Dressing Room Accommodation for	500—600 persons	Ordinary Lighting of	Cables 10 miles
		Building and Offices	Steel conduits 2 miles
		Laboratories Output Capacity	
		(minimum)	2,000,000 ft. per week

## UNDER CONSTRUCTION

Stages	1	Carpenters' Erecting Shop	1
Viewing Theatres	5	Plasterers' Shop	1
Orchestration Theatre	1	Modelling Department	
Cutting Rooms	12	Stores	
Film Vaults	9	Garages	
Administrative Offices	—	"Still" Laboratory	
Restaurant to seat	600	Camera Repair Shop	

GAUMONT BRITISH SOUND FILM STUDIOS.  
LIME GROVE, SHEPHERDS BUSH, W.12.



GROUND FLOOR PLAN

LIME GROVE

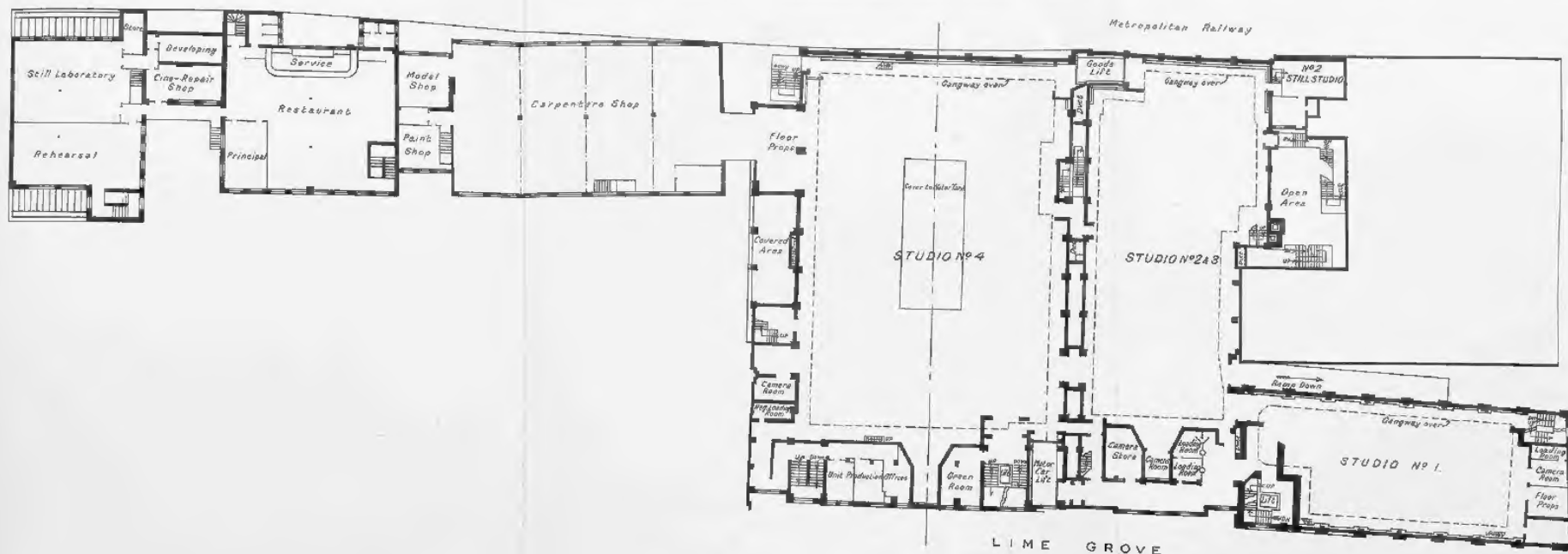
Drawing No 329/55  
March 1932.

Scale 1" = 24' 0"

Consulting Architects -  
Nichols & Mann, 19, F.R.I.B.A.  
19 Hanover Sq. W.1.

S.B. Pritchard, L.R.I.B.A.,  
Architect.  
6 Denman Street, W.1.

GAUMONT BRITISH SOUND FILM STUDIOS.  
LIME GROVE, SHEPHERDS BUSH, W.12.



FIRST FLOOR PLAN (DATUM LEVEL)

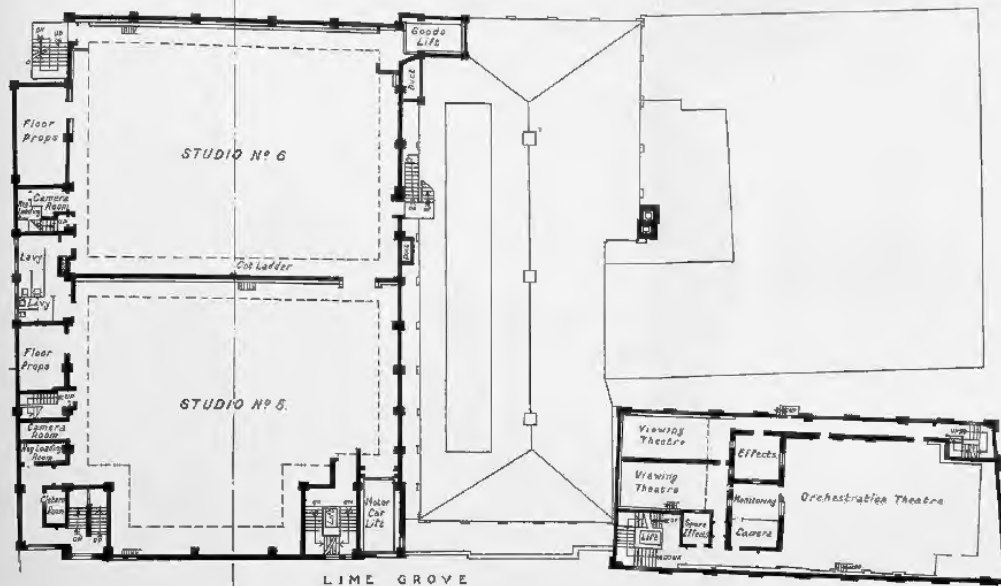
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March 1932

Scale 1" = 24'0"

Consulting Architects  
Nicholas & Nixon-Spain PERMANENT

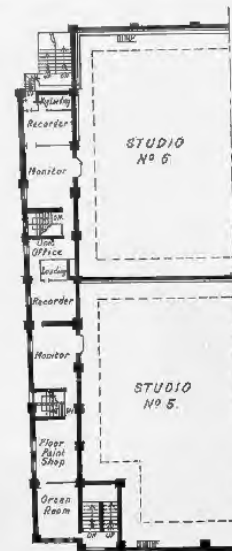
S. B. Pritchard L.R.I.B.A.  
Architect  
8 Danman Street W.1.

GAUMONT BRITISH SOUND FILM STUDIOS.  
LIME GROVE, SHEPHERDS BUSH, W.12.



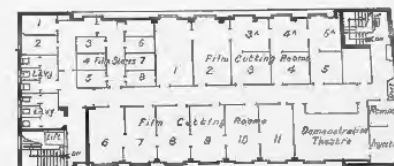
STUDIOS No 5 & 6

STUDIO No 1

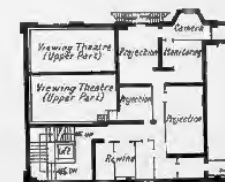


MEZZANINE PLAN 48' 10" A.D.

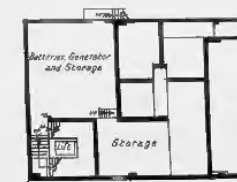
STUDIO No 5 & 6.



THIRD FLOOR PLAN 59' 8" A.D.  
STUDIO No 1.



MEZZANINE PLAN 43' 9"



MEZZANINE PLAN 48' 9"

STUDIO No 1.

SECOND FLOOR AND MEZZANINES

Drawing No 325/38  
March 1932

Scale 1" = 24' 0"

Consulting Architects:-  
Nicholas Dixon Spein FRIBA  
19 Hanover Sq. W.1.

S. E. Pridmore L.R.I.B.A.  
Architect.  
6 Denman Street W.1.